

The Face of Global Trade: SCREAMER®

The mountains that surround Puget Sound are an inspiration to many of us who call this region home. To Screamer Hats they are the testing grounds of a small company that has found success in cool climates across the globe.

Screamer Hats makes fun, traditional and technical winter hats for adults and children. When they say fun, Jan Lawrence and Steve Burkholder, founders of the company aren't kidding.

Spikes and Mohawks adorn some hats, while others maintain a sleek leather or short brimmed style. Screamer began in 1993 after a group ski trip in which Lawrence sewed hats for her 20 ski buddies. The hats were a hit, not only with the group, but to the many admiring skiers and local ski apparel shop owners who encouraged the pair to make the hobby into a business. From the slopes to their headquarters near Safeco Field, Screamer hats now adorn trend setters around the globe.

INTERNATIONAL

In a typical year, around 40% of Screamer's products are made for overseas markets. The volume of production that their international sales generate is vital to their ability to keep marginal costs low and sell domestically, where Screamer generates the highest profit. Without overseas sales Screamer would be unable

to receive competitive pricing on their input materials. Selling hats overseas also provides Screamer some stability in a business that depends on the volatility of the weather. When Snoqualmie Pass is bare, it is likely that somewhere in the world the slopes are covered and the temperature is cold. A global sales presence helps reduce Screamer's dependence on one market.



Why Puget Sound

Beyond the abundant lifestyle opportunities which make the Puget Sound area a great place to live and do business, a number of requirements come together here

which make operating a global small business possible. For Screamer it is the proximity of the Seaport, Airport, and technology infrastructure. Puget Sound ports offer direct access to Asia and Europe, as well as to North America. The Ports of Seattle and Tacoma could just as easily be called the Port of Chicago or the Port of Tokyo. Technology is also critical to Screamer. For instance, they recently finished their product catalog for next season. Photography for it was done in Seattle and Colorado, design and layout was done in Austria and printing was done in Canada, and it was all made possible by the Internet and Greater Seattle's technology infrastructure and technology companies.

Screamer Hats is zany proof that small businesses can succeed in international markets. According to CEO Steve Burkholder, "the global economy is not just important to us, it is critical to our existence." Although small outfits like Screamer may appear to have little in common with the multinational corporations that claim much of the attention in international business, they are no less dependent on global trade and their success is equally vital to Greater Seattle.

Name: Screamer Hats

Location: Seattle, King County

International Sales: 20%

Puget Sound Employees: 4

International Markets: Eastern and Western Europe, Scandinavia, UK, Korea and Japan.

Puget Sound Enabler: Geographic proximity between Europe and Asia, port infrastructure, technology infrastructure, lifestyle